

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL WEDNESDAY
MAY 5 HEADED "PANAMA TROUBLEMAKING."

2. NOWHERE IS THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN DOING MORE MISCHIEF
TO FOREIGN POLICY THAN ON THE SUBJECT OF THE PANAMA CANAL.
THE PARTICULAR TARGET IS THE NEGOTIATIONS THE UNITED STATES
HAS BEEN CONDUCTING WITH PANAMA TO WRITE A NEW TREATY THAT
WOULD ASSURE CONTINUED AMERICAN ACCESS TO THIS VITAL INTER-
NATIONAL WATERWAY. TURNING THE MATTER ON ITS HEAD, RONALD
REAGAN REPEATEDLY CLAIMS THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS AMOUNT TO A
"GIVEAWAY" OF SOMETHING THAT IS "OURS." A FLUSTERED
PRESIDENT FORD HAS RESPONDED BY SAYING ON THE ONE HAND THAT
THE UNITED STATES WILL "NEVER" YIELD DEFENSE AND OPERATIONAL
RIGHTS (THOUGH THE POINT OF NEGOTIATIONS IS PRECISELY TO
DETERMINE THE TERMS ON WHICH TO YIELD THESE RIGHTS), AND
ON THE OTHER HAND THAT IT IS "IRRESPONSIBLE" OF GOV. REAGAN
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TO SUGGEST THAT NEGOTIATIONS BE BROKEN OFF. IS THERE ANY-

ONE IN THE HOUSE WHO CAN PARSE THAT? THE ONLY RESTRAINED PARTY TO THE DISPUTE IS THE PANAMANIAN SIDE, WHICH HAD REALIZED THAT THE CANAL WAS UNIQUELY PREY TO AMERICAN POLITICAL FEVERS AND HAD WISELY DECIDED TO WAIT TO CONSUMMATE THE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL NEXT YEAR.

3. JUST WHAT CURRENTS IN THE AMERICAN PSYCHE GOV. REAGAN IS TAPPING ON PANAMA IS A QUESTION DEFYING CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL ANALYSIS. IS IT AN EXPRESSION OF REPRESSED RESENTMENT OVER THE HUMILIATION WHICH SOME AMERICANS BELIEVE WE SUFFERED IN VIETNAM? AN EXPRESSION OF THE EXPANSIONISM, IMPERIALISM, JINGOISM--CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL--RESPONSIBLE FOR THE AMERICAN ACQUISITION OF THE CANAL IN THE FIRST PLACE? DOES IT REPRESENT DEEPER MISGIVINGS OVER THE METHOD--SETTLEMENT AND CONQUEST--BY WHICH THE WHOLE HOME TERRITORY OF THE UNITED STATES WAS ASSEMBLED? OR DOES IT REPRESENT A GENUINE BELIEF THAT THE CANAL ZONE ACTUALLY IS AMERICAN SOVEREIGN TERRITORY?

4. THIS LAST PREMISE IS, OF COURSE, FALSE. MR. REAGAN'S EARNEST REITERATIONS NOTWITHSTANDING, THE ZONE AND CANAL ARE NOT AMERICAN SOVEREIGN TERRITORY. BY THE EMBARRASSINGLY ONE-SIDED HAY-BUNAU-VARILLA TREATY OF 1903, THE UNITED STATES EXTRACTED RIGHTS ("USE, OCCUPATION AND CONTROL") BUT NOT SOVEREIGNTY; THESE RIGHTS WERE GRANTED ONLY "AS IF (THE UNITED STATES) WERE SOVEREIGN." SINCE 1905 THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS ACKNOWLEDGED AS MUCH. MARILY BERGER APTLY NOTED ON THESE PAGES THE OTHER DAY THAT SOME ROUTINE ATTRIBUTES OF SOVEREIGNTY ARE MISSING: AN AMERICAN CAN LIVE IN THE ZONE ONLY AS LONG AS HE OR SHE WORKS THERE; A CHILD BORN THERE OF PANAMANIAN PARENTS IS NOT AN AMERICAN CITIZEN

5. THE CROWDS THAT ROAR AT RONALD REAGAN'S STRUMMING OF THEIR EMOTIONS ON PANAMA DESERVE BETTER OF A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. FOR THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT MR. REAGAN HAS ARRIVED AT HIS POSITION OUT OF A CALCULATED JUDGEMENT THAT AMERICAN INTERESTS WOULD BE BETTER PROTECTED IF THE UNITED STATES HUNG ON INDEFINITELY TO THE CANAL. ON THE CONTRARY, HIS COURSE STANDS ONLY TO PROVOKE THE PANAMANIANS AND TO COMPLICATE AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER LATIN NATIONS--ALL OF THEM--WHO, REGARDLESS OF DOMESTIC IDEOLOGY, SHARE TH UNCLASSIFIED

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PANAMANIAN CONVICTION THAT THE AMERICAN HOLD IS AN ANACHRONISM THAT MUST GRADUALLY (OVER A PERIOD OF DECADES) BE REMOVED. GOV. REAGAN EVIDENTLY WOULD RATHER SEE THE CANAL CLOSED AND FOUGHT OVER--JUST AS LONG AS IT STAYS IN AMERILA HANDS--THAN TO SEE IT OPEN AND PEACEFUL UNDER PANAMANIAN CONTROL.

6. MR. FORD ERRS IN TERMS OF BOTH POLICY AND POLITICS, WE

BELIEVE, BY TRYING TO MOVE TO HIS RIGHT ON THIS ISSUE TO
SOFTEN THE REAGAN ATTACK. HE SHOULD MOVE BACK TO THE
CENTER, CALMLY GO ON WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND PUT HIMSELF
FORWARD TO THE VOTERS AS THE STEWARD OF THE VITAL AND
LEGITIMATE AMERICAN INTEREST IN ASSURING CONTINUED FREE
AMERICAN TRANSIT THROUGH THE CANAL. (END TEXT.) SISCO

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